

### **REMARKS**

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Currently, claims 1-2, 5-15, 23, 29-34, and 36-38, including independent claims 1 and 23, are pending in the present application. For instance, independent claim 1 is directed to a multi-component liquid that comprises a first filter element and a second filter element. The second filter element has a pleated surface having a surface contact area greater than the surface contact area of the first filter element. The pleated surface of the second filter element comprises pleats having an average pitch from about 0.0625 to about 5 inches. The first filter element contains a charge-modified material. The second filter element contains a particulate laminate having two or more layers of filter media. In addition, one of the filter elements has a filter volume of less than about 6 cubic inches.

In the Office Action, independent claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,980,759 to Proulx, et al. Proulx, et al. describes a filter medium formed of (a) a depth filter and (b) a pleated screen or surface filter. The depth filter is layered and contains a plurality of filtration media, each having a different retention efficiency rating. The surface or screen filter contains one or a plurality of pleated layers, each being formed of a medium having a lower retention rating than that of the layers of the depth filter medium. The surface or screen filter may also contain one or more spacer layers to support the membrane filter sheet. As correctly noted by the Examiner, however, Proulx, et al. fails to disclose certain aspects

of independent claim 1. For example, Proulx, et al. fails to disclose the specific dimensions of the pleats.

Nevertheless, in the Office Action, it was stated that one of ordinary skill in the art would have found it obvious to achieve the claimed dimensions by optimizing the surface area/capacity requirements of the filter. However, Applicants emphasize that the entire claimed invention must be considered as a whole. In this case, the present inventors have discovered that a specific combination of attributes leads to an improved liquid filter. Namely, as set forth in claim 1, the filter includes a first filter element and a second filter element, i.e., is multicomponent. Each of these filter elements may selectively remove different contaminants. The first filter element contains a charge-modified material. The second filter element is a particulate laminate, has a pleated surface, and has a filter volume of less than about 6 cubic inches. Proulx, et al. simply does not teach all of the various aspects of claim 1 when properly viewed as a whole. For example, the particular dimension of the pleats and size of the filter element may maximize the filtration properties of the filter without significantly increasing the cost or the size of the filter.

In addition, the filter element of claim 1 is a particulate laminate, such as a laminate containing activated carbon particles, which is nowhere disclosed or suggested in Proulx, et al. However, in the Office Action, it was stated that U.S. Patent No. 5,092,990 to Muramatsu, et al. taught a pleated filter with activated carbon particles, and that it would have been obvious to use such particles in the filter of Proulx, et al.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Muramatsu, et al. was cited in combination with Proulx, et al. to reject dependent claims 13 and 32-34.

Muramatsu, et al. describes a pre-coat layer formed of activated carbon powder particles adhered evenly to the outer surface of a filter membrane made from filter cloth. Applicants emphasize, however, that the teachings of references must be viewed in their entirety, i.e., as a whole, to sustain a *prima facie* case of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). In this case, not only would one of ordinary skill in the art be required to incorporate the specific filter membrane construction of Muramatsu, et al. into the filter of Proulx, et al., but one would then need to select the claimed pleat size (average pitch) and filter volume, in conjunction with the other claimed limitations, in an attempt to render obvious claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would simply not have been motivated to make such a multitude of modifications to the teachings of Proulx, et al. Thus, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 patentably defines over the above-cited references, taken singularly or in any proper combination.

In addition, the above-cited reference(s) were also cited to reject independent claim 23 and dependent claims 2, 5-15, and 29-34. Applicants respectfully submit, however, that at least for the reasons indicated above relating to independent claim 1, claims 2, 5-15, 23, and 29-34 patentably define over the reference(s) cited. However, Applicants also note that the patentability of claims 2, 5-15, 23, and 29-34 does not necessarily hinge on the patentability of independent claim 1. In particular, some or all of these claims may possess features that are independently patentable, regardless of the patentability of claim 1.

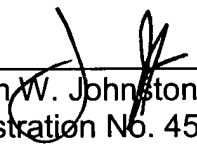
In summary, Applicants respectfully submit that the present claims patentably define over the prior art of record for at least the reasons set forth above. As such, it is

believed that the present application is in complete condition for allowance and favorable action, therefore, is respectfully requested. Examiner Menon is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned, however, should any issues remain after consideration of this response.

Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 04-1403.

Respectfully requested,

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